



## Local Community Development Arround the Bay of Bengal

*Context, Crises and Perspectives*

Nielsen, Henrik A.

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DEPARTMENT OF DEVELOPMENT AND PLANNING  
AALBORG UNIVERSITY  
FIBIGERSTRAEDE 2  
DK 9220 AALBORG Ö  
DENMARK

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**REPORT FROM THE RESEARCHER TRAINING SEMINAR**

**Local Community Development Around the Bay of Bengal:  
Context, Crises and Perspectives**

**by**

**Henrik A. Nielsen**

DEVELOPMENT RESEARCH SERIES  
DEVELOPMENT RESEARCH UNIT

TELEPH. +45 98 15 85 22  
TELEFAX +45 98 15 69 50

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## 1. Summary

This Research Seminar on Local Community Development Around the Bay of Bengal, held in the rural setting in Rebild, North Jutland, gathered eleven researchers for two days of presentation and discussions of research projects, all of which were related to this region. The seminar tried to see, if a common approach, based upon this geographical platform could be fruitful for the understanding of the respective research projects and for the joint debate. As a departure point two papers were presented: one by Dr. Martin Greeley on the natural environment and the challenges, which it poses to the rural population, and in particular on the possible alternative developments, which might be feasible, when more emphasis is put upon specific interventions e.g. supporting the rural poor women. Another, by Dr. Neil Webster on the political environment, and in particular the linkages between the local community and central government institutions. Taking a historical view on India, Pakistan and Bangladesh, and describing the traditional pattern of local elites dominating the rural communities by patron-clients relationships, this paper also looks into possible alternative ways of development: the new economic roles now being established in the local communities seem to have worsened the situation, but more 'room for manoeuvre' might be created, if the policies are designed to loosen the social relations and to facilitate an improvement in the ability of the disabled groups to realize their entitlements.

Methodologically, the seminar introduced the Participatory Rural Appraisal methods by Parmesh Shah (who has worked closely together with Dr. Robert Chambers). The advantages and also the limitations of the many-sided and flexible ways of using the PRA was clearly demonstrated. In this connection, the model for the analysis of 'culture', as developed by Professor Hans Gullestrup, was seen as one way of understanding the changes of the local community.

The specific papers presented encompassed a wide range of issues, but all making reference to the local communities in the region, from technological and natural science-based topics to cultural and humanistic fields of research. However, the all contained or related to the social environment in which the respective local community is located. A major conclusion from the seminar is, that it is very fruitful to discuss such issues in a research community, irrespective of it's disciplinary composition, as long as a common knowledge and understanding of the specific regional or local community is present among the researchers.

While a common 'Bay of Bengal'-approach was not developed, the seminar succeeded in creating an atmosphere of joint understanding and constructive criticism, not least because of the rather limited number of participants having a common specific geographical regional knowledge, and the appropriate organisation in a confined rural setting. It was in general found, that similar seminars should be offered more frequently, in particular for the Ph.D-candidates on a Nordic basis.

## 2. Introduction

During the 80s, a dynamic development has been experienced in general in South and Southeast Asia in many fields: the cities have grown and pulled a steady flow of migrants from the rural areas, while at the same time, the rural areas pushed many unemployed towards the urban areas; simultaneously, a downward trend in prices on most agricultural cash crops and a lack of improvement in the real wages has underlined the need for poverty alleviation for the majority of the population.

However, on this seminar the focus is not on the global, general situation, but on the situation as experienced from below, i.e. the local community: how are the changes affecting the people at the village level? And in particular, how are they affecting the people around the Bay of Bengal, as defined in the theme of the seminar?

Further, the approach of the seminar on the local communities around the Bay of Bengal, is based upon the assumptions, that similar economic and social problems, access to the same resource, i.e. the sea, and a common cultural history will make it possible to apply a common research approach, regardless of the field of science or the specific problem. Whether these assumptions are valid is to be seen during the course of the discussions.

A few additional remarks on the common background as outlined in the theme:

The natural calamities, such as the floods, the cyclones and the future greenhouse effect, have been affected also by the manmade new technologies: the green revolution has possibly sunk the groundwater table, and the extension of fertilizers and pesticides has polluted the environment. The coming Flood Action Plan of Bangladesh, being designed by the World Bank and the donor community, is in particular on debate, and the outcome of it's implementation is very uncertain. However, for the local community there is an obvious need for another development.

As regard the political environment, the results are also dubious for the local communities. A change in the local government system is under way in Bangladesh, but the direction and possibilities for accountability and transparency are quite unknown. The gaps between the urban/industrial versus the agricultural/rural poor are increasing, and the roles of the state and the ngo's are to be shaped. Which are the relations with the people of the villages? And will they be able to act as political entities?

Finally, some information on the existing research within the area of the Bay of Bengal. Professor Shapan Adnan has made an Annotation of the Village Studies in Bangladesh and West Bengal in 1989, as a review of the socio-economic trends of the previous Province of Bengal. This<sup>1</sup> includes about 370 entries of the history of change within the villages of Bengal, but actually very little longitudinal data. Most of the village studies are like onetime snapshots, and very little is contained in the studies of e.g. the processes of village formation and change, evaluation of the demographic trends, adjustments in the land-man relationships, shifts in agricultural production, technological changes, trends in the non-agricultural sectors or changes in the social organisations. Obviously, there is a need for ongoing and continued research, and there is a need for more regional studies, like the one made for Greater Noakhali-area in 1988<sup>2</sup>

It would be interesting, if the studies presented on this seminar could be seen in such a perspective of continued research.

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<sup>1</sup> Shapan Adnan: Annotation of Village Studies in Bangladesh and West Bengal: A Review of Socio-Economic Trends over 1942-88, BARD, Comilla, 1989.

<sup>2</sup> Monitoring & Evaluation Unit/NRDP-2 & Shapan Adnan: Socio-Economic Trends in Greater Noakhali Area 1975-87, Majdee, 1988.



### **3. The Theme of the Seminar: Local Community Development Around the Bay of Bengal: Context, Crises and Perspectives**

#### Researcher Training Seminar

#### **Local Community Development Around the Bay of Bengal: Context, Crises and Perspectives.**

Cimbrergaarden, Rebild, November, 12-13, 1992.

The local communities in South Asia have been influenced by several dynamic developments during the 80's. The lack of opportunities in the villages of the rural areas and the modernization and priority of investments, both public and private, in the cities and other urban areas has pushed many of the educated, young and inventive people away from the villages, leaving the remaining community to rely on its own resources. Furthermore, the change in prices for agricultural products and consumer goods has not favoured the villagers. At the same time, the local communities have faced natural calamities, and the destructive forces of manmade environmental damages such as erosion, flooding, and unbalanced felling of the rainforests.

Around the Bay of Bengal, from the Bangladeshi districts of Chittagong, Noakhali, Barguna, Patuakhali and Khulna, and along the Indian States of West Bengal, Orissa, Andhra Pradesh and Tamil Nadu, the local communities of farmers and fisherfolk face similar problems, basically originating from the natural environment or the political and economic environment. Further, they share access to the same large resource, the sea, and have a common cultural history, including the inheritance of similar political structures over the centuries. The seminar will focus upon similarities and differences of the communities concerned and discuss, to which degree a common research approach might be applied for the study of these communities.

Natural calamities have increasingly during the last decades inflicted great losses on mankind, infrastructures and the agriculture. Floods caused by the silting of the rivers and the delta or

possibly by the structural regulations, as well as the frequent cyclones threaten the coastal communities physically and reduce their productive capacity. In particular, the fisherfolk communities are exposed. These natural disasters might be seen as a trial of the expected longterm results of the greenhouse effect, which in particular will overtake the lowlying land around the Bay of Bengal. However, the natural environment of the local communities is also affected by the new technologies of rice production and the increased search for resources. The technology of the green revolution is not gentle towards land, which needs additional water and protection against erosion. Through electrification and watersupply by deep tubewells the productivity of the farming has been raised, but the groundwater table has sunk. The increased use of irrigation might in a few years lead to shortage of water. Meanwhile, the uncontrolled extension of fertilizers and pesticides is a dangerous poisoning of the environment with longterm implications. Finally, the remaining rainforest of the Sundarbans demands special care of the local communities to protect this vital natural resource from exhaustion.

There is an increasing interest for the development of alternative technologies, which might be more suitable for these areas, such as windmills, biotechnologies and new techniques of irrigation. For the fisherfolk, new types of equipment, or adaption of common rules for protection and pooling of the resources of the sea, might be needed. In any case, the question is, if sufficient national resources may be invested in this field, or the local communities are able to mobilise their own resources to support another development?

This in turn put the focus on the linkages between the local community and the political environment in which the community is located. While the overall, longterm national economic development, in particular in India, is showing some positive signs of increased agricultural production per inhabitant, and the urbanisation and industrial development over the last 40 years has been considerable as a result of a conscious public strategy, the results for the local communities around the Bay of Bengal are dubious. Investments have been less and the improvements in general living standards are hard to find in the rural areas in the periphery of the countries, often less accessible than other areas. Application of the UN Human Development Index on the Indian States places Orissa at the bottom, while West Bengal and Tamil Nadu is in the middle. The gaps between the industry and the urban elites, and the agriculture and the rural poor, are actually increasing.

Moreover, the trends in recent years towards modernization, privatization, increasingly market-oriented economy and decreasingly reliance on public subsidies, combined with fewer available resources for the national governments and the local states, make the situation for the local communities in the periphery even more serious. The future development may be

analyzed from the perspective of three different actors: what is the role of the state? what is the role of the NGOs working in the local communities? and most importantly: which are the relations with the people of the community? Will the communities be able to act as a political entity and influence it's own destiny, as seen from the peasants movements in some of the Indian States?

The seminar will discuss the two basic issues (the natural and the economic and political environment) and their implications for the researchers through presentation by the participants of cases related to the local communities around the Bay of Bengal, and through introductions given by lecturers with relevant experiences. The last part of the seminar will in particular focus on the research methods to be applied for the study of the local communities.

Convenors:       Senior Lecturer Henrik A. Nielsen, DDP,  
                      Research Fellow Neil Webster, CDR, and  
                      Professor Hans Gullestrup, DDP.

Lecturers:        Research Fellow. Dr. Martin Greeley, IDS  
                      Parmesh Shah, IDS

## **4. Abstracts of the Introductions**

### **4.1. The Challenges of the Natural Environment Around the Bay of Bengal, by Dr. Martin Greeley.**

The environmental issues faced by the people around the Bay of Bengal, are mainly the cyclones, the floods and the other changes influenced by man such as the agricultural intensification and preservation of the habitat and species. The general responses to these challenges, often termed "the greening of aid" is not to be accepted wholesale, since this approach is based upon the classical economics, which is biased in method and affect the rural poor people adversely for a number of reasons:

- the time frameworks are different for the rural poor, i.e. more limited as they follow a short-term survival strategy,
- the natural resource dependence is not important for the urban dwellers,
- there is no sharing of increased costs for producers and consumers, since in the subsistence economy, the producers and the consumers are the same.

As such, the poverty linkage, i.e. the possible alleviation due to the change in the direction of aid, is not documented sufficiently. On the contrary, evidences of effects of the agricultural intensification point in the direction of a deterioration of the situation, e.g. a lowering of the ground water table, or the creation of "waterlords", where the electricity supply has been improved for irrigation purposes.

The Flood Action Plan (FAP), which is now being debated, originated as a response to the extreme flooding experienced during several successive years. While the rural poor in general has learnt to live with the floods, it was a new experiences to the urban population of Dhaka (and the expatriate community residing there). The interest of the donors and the Dhaka-based governmental concern is the possibilities the plan opens for spending many money and juicy contracts. The Ministry of Irrigation and the donors push the FAP to promote their investments, consulting firms and future markets. But it is conflicting with the interests of the NGOs, the Ministry of Agriculture and the farmers, who are living with the floods in the rural areas, where they have developed the floodplain agriculture. In assessing the benefits of the

FAP, only the anticipated increase in the agricultural production is measured, expected to increase the yield pr. acre from half a ton to 2.5 ton. However, the skew distribution of the benefits among the beneficiaries is not included, and in particular the fishing aspects, where losses can be expected due to the controlled flooding, are lacking as shown by Mahabub Hossain<sup>3</sup>. Further, the income distribution is not affected by the Green Revolution, and it thus might not be expected, that the FAP will have any poverty alleviation effects.

As agriculture is intensified, the rural poor copes with two needs: to increase the employment, and to raise the labour productivity. In general, they work against each other, but for the irrigated agriculture, both needs may be supported. The problem is to create linkages within the rural areas, which will promote the growth of rural smallscale industries. The problems of the periphery are the lack of infrastructure, which leads to high transport and communications costs, and the lack of sufficient markets, since consumers are poor. Accordingly, the lack of linkages causes a transfer of the surplus from the agricultural growth to the urban and capital areas, e.g. from Bhola District to Dhaka.

A case on the situation of the women may be illuminative. The material basis of the patriarchy is, that in the landed household, the male work in the field may be 55 %, while the female yard work may be 45 % (of the total work production). If the family becomes landless, the male may continue his economic role in somebody's other fields or in the market, but the lack of a proper economic role for the female, and the general pauperization may often lead to a divorce, which make the situation disastrous for the women. An alternative for the landless women is to process the rice for others utilising smallscale ricemills, which might be supported by rural electrification programmes (as e.g. USAID is doing it). The advantages are, that women are better "socialised" in the sense, that they are better than men in recording, repayment and sustaining the activities.

ACTIONAID is an NGO, replicating Grameen Bank in Bhola in targeting their programme towards rural women, who form groups, perform regular savings, receive credit for specific purposes against group collateral, and to whom educational and health training is given. As the woman is an easier access point for entering the family household, an individual "family plan" is elaborated for it's economic and social development. The intention is, that within maybe 10 years in the District, the programme should be "owned" locally and managed by the users themselves.

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<sup>3</sup> Mahabub Hossain: Impact of the Green Revolution in Bangladesh, Bangladesh Institute of Development Studies/International Food Policy Research Institute, July 1988.

Monitoring of the programme is used as a motivational tool. Records are collected and compiled by computers every 2nd week by the programme headquarters at Bhola. A special index, termed SAMASART (Survive, Avoid Malnutrition, Attend School, and Read Index), is collected and calculated by the beneficiaries themselves, keeping the mastercopy with the chairwoman, and forwarding a copy to the headquarters. It is defined as follows:

$$\begin{array}{rcl}
 & \text{Surviving School Attenders (5+)} & \\
 + & \text{Surviving with Upper Arm between 5 and 13 cms.} & \\
 \hline
 \end{array}$$

Live Births

An alternative for the men at Bhola and the surrounding islands, is to work as seasonal labour gangs during the winter in cured fish production in the Bay of Bengal. Using set bagnet (Behundi Jal), the operations are organised from Commission Agents in Chittagong (around 23 in total), who through Yard Operators and Yard Headmen engage the wage labourers. They are not actual fishermen, but rather migrant labour, working seasonally, and totalling about 10.000 men.<sup>4</sup>

#### **4.2 The Linkages Between the Local Community and the Political Environment, by Dr. Neil Webster.**

A high degree of homogeneity between the communities in the region of the Bay of Bengal is not easily found. However, three conditions are identified as providing a common context:

1. The resource condition (fish, land and rice cultivation),
2. The economic situation (poverty rooted in underdevelopment),
3. The political situation (primarily political marginality and neglect).

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<sup>4</sup> See also: IBRD, Report No. 8830-Bangladesh: Bangladesh Fisheries Sector Review, March, 20, 1991, Agricultural Operation Division, Asia Country Dept.1.

Although the focus is on the local political situation, it is difficult to separate this from factors related to the local resource and socio-economic conditions. The issue of agency-structure, as a current theme in the theoretical debate, is unavoidable, when the focus is on the local development: empowerment of the poor, decentralization of the state, privatisation, etc., are all terms dominating the debate and constituting a shift away from seeing the state as the principal agency for implementing development. In this seminar the question is posed: can and/or should the development of the local communities come from national resources or can and/or should the local communities mobilise their own resources to support another development? The underlying fundamental question is where does development come from? Should we look to the social and economic forces at the centre-state and local levels, and how those structures bringing more development at the local level? or should we look for a more actor-oriented strategy, in which the local has a greater autonomy, thereby representing a break with the practise of development planning in the region?

However, the need for clearer concepts and an approach combining a structuralist and an actor-oriented approach is huge. This is as much a political issue, and involves the process of interactions within the local political environment.

Historically, India, Pakistan and Bangladesh inherited the basic administrative structures with the district as the focal point from the British. With the introduction of the Community Development Programme in India, and with various autonomous and semi-autonomous agencies established, the administrative apparatus of the new state it permitted the cementing of the market for posts, the institutionalising of corruption, and the mutual supportive relationship between administrators and politicians, not least at local levels. Generally speaking, this has resulted in highly hierarchical, vertically segmented administrative structure in which accountability is to the one above, while downward or horizontal accountability and responsibility is minimal. The centralization and concentration of power towards the centre has been reinforced particularly in recent years.

In all Indian states, except for West Bengal, development remains largely in the hands of the development administration with the lower bodies, the gram panchayats, where they remain, merely having minor local responsibilities. The village as a political unit has had little impact upon the structure of local government apart from an involvement in promoting individual members of the local elite into positions within the hierarchy of political and administrative institutions, from which little need for accountability to the local community is shown. On the other hand, the structure of local government has had a major impact on the politics of the



local community through the emergence of local political patrons who can deliver services and 'get things done'. Development merely intensifies this process, reinforcing the factionalism.

The economic roles of the local structures have changed and worsened the situation. Land reforms in India in the fifties and sixties had the impact of the decline of very large landowners and an increasingly significant level of more local landowners with a far closer relationship to their land, and thus, also affected by the growth in population, with a reduction in the amount of land available for sharecropping. The complex network of relations that the sharecropper is locked into has led to an intensification of their overall dependency on the landowner, i.e. a worsening of the patron-client relationship, or even loss of all access to land as a sharecropper. The impact of the green revolution has even implied, that it is the high risk land, that is given out to tenants. Moreover, commercialisation in agriculture has made the markets to play an increasing role in the economic lives of many in the villages. Fish breeders in Bardhaman think nothing of travelling down into the south of Sout 24 Parganas or into Bangladesh for their fish trade. The political significance of these developments has been the increasing subjection of clients to patrons, but also in some areas, the opening up of local politics, possibly introducing a more complex and a more transitory basis for local political factionalism.

The dominating social structures are probably those of caste and kinship, with caste possibly being more pivotal in India and kinship in Bangladesh, although other important social structures include ethnicity and gender. So, the local political leaders are generated from the dominant local structures of caste and kinship. In this way one cannot speak of individual political action as it is subjected to the authority of the lineage or the local caste. The followers are faced with a multiplicity of ties linking them with different factional leaders (for concrete services such as land, credit, education, employment, and more symbolic ones, e.g. caste based services, respect, etc.), and the political behaviour cannot be deduced from their role in one sub-structure alone. If, as is the case of West Bengal, the implementation of direct elections to the lowest levels of development administration is accompanied by land reforms, support for minimum wages, literacy programmes, and collectively constitutes a programme of reformist intervention plus decentralization and empowerment of the poorer sections - then the market for political services, as well as the markets for land (e.g. sharecropping), rural resources, etc., are opened up for new developments and possible changes. The elite domination through patronage is not so easy, and can be seriously challenged by the introduction of party politics into the village.



Is there an alternative development? We should not set the local community against the state, as an alternative to the state, but instead look within the local community to those socio-economic groups, that we wish to support, and outside the local community to the state, and seek a development alternative, that acts at both levels. In other words, alternative paths of development in which the support and the participation of the individuals involved is a prerequisite for this search for 'room for manoeuvre'<sup>5</sup>. However, while giving agency<sup>6</sup> to people, it is a limited agency within a circumscribed social setting. Further, the focus is not on the expense of the state, demanding the 'retreat of the state', but it is to add 'the people' to the development equation as more active and instrumental participants in the process. In this way, the centrality of the state's role in creating the 'new socialist individual' or the 'capitalist entrepreneur' is ended. Instead, just as there can be a significant 'room for manoeuvre' for the individual, so can there also be 'room for manoeuvre' around and within the state, not least in the formulation and implementation of development policy.

The argument put forward here is, that policies designed to facilitate the loosening of the social relations and facilitating first an improvement in the ability of women, low and scheduled caste, etc., to realize their existing entitlements, and secondly an expansion of their entitlements, could enlarge the 'room for manoeuvre' for such social groups, weakening factionalism and generating a new direction for local politics.

To conclude therefore, what the quest for an alternative development requires, is an investigation of the potential 'room for manoeuvre' at both the state and local levels, i.e. an assessment of the potential for enlightened facilitatory intervention by the state, that can support local initiatives at the local level. The basis for local initiatives is there, but researchers have often failed to recognise their presence or potential. This is the task for researchers, if they are to identify an alternative form of development to either the state-centred path of today's Bay of Bengal region or the somewhat idealist notion of neo-populist path of development based around the notion of community.

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<sup>5</sup> The concept of a 'room for manoeuvre' with reference to the state is discussed in Clay, E.J. & Schaffer, B.B. (1984).

<sup>6</sup> The general discussion of structure and agency draws in particular on Long, N.: 'From Paradigm Lost to Paradigm Regained? The Case for an Actor-oriented Sociology of Development', *European Review of Latin American and Caribbean Studies*, 49, December, 1990.

**4.3. Participatory Rural Appraisal: A Research Approach and a Method of Learning About Rural Life and Conditions From, With and By Rural People, by Parmesh Shah, Institute of Development Studies, Sussex.**

The continuum of research-development presents two paradigms of point of departures or reference for understanding the reality, which is somewhere in between, of things and people:

Point of Departure:	Things:	People:
Mode:	Blueprint	Process
Keyword:	Planning	Participation
Goals:	Preset, Closed	Evolving, Open
Decision-making:	Centralised	Decentralised
Analytical Assumptions	Reductionist	Systems, Holistic
Methods, Rules:	Standardised	Diverse
	Universal	Local
Technology:	Fixed Package	Varied Basket
	(Table d'hotel)	(à la carte)
Professionals'	Motivating	Enabling
Interactions with	Controlling	Empowering
Clients:		
Clients Seen As:	Beneficiaries	Actors
Force Flow:	Supply-Push	Demand-Pull
Outputs:	Uniform	Diverse
	Infrastructure	Capabilities

The Rapid Rural Appraisal-methods were the first response to the challenge of changing the attitudes of the professionals. It has later developed into the Participatory Rural Appraisal, and even a more appropriate term, the Participatory Rural Planning. The important thing is to enable people to retain the information, and learning is thus the most important objective. The PRA is seen as a confluence of several streams of methodological research: the applied anthropology, the activist participatory research, the farming systems research, the agroecosystem analysis, and the rapid rural appraisal. The PRA is a method for rural survey and

research, a planning, management and monitoring tool, a method/strategy for eliciting/increasing/introducing participation by local communities, and a training methodology.

The list of specific PRA-methods is very long, but some ideas are seen as follows:

- participatory mapping and modelling, using available materials,
- transects, i.e. walking through the village with villagers and asking on physical observations (e.g. on water-soil use) ending up with meeting and discussion: five different tours each of 3 hours in a village,
- matrix ranking and scoring: making choice between use of different resources, and discussing why the ranking is done in this way,
- wealth ranking, incl. ranking of well-being,
- seasonal analysis and diagramming,
- analytical diagramming, to understand the policy impacts,
- time lines to outline the history of the village,
- institutional chapatti diagramming,
- estimating, measuring, scoring, quatification,
- semi-structured interviews,
- focus group discussion,
- presentation and analysis,
- interactive questionnaires.

It is recommended, that the methods are most effective, when used in sequences.

What are the limitations of these methods? Many, as may be seen:

- sustained innovation is required to maintain the level of information over time,
- the initial stage is difficult without experiences,
- sequences are required, which may be difficult to handle,
- intermediary outputs are available, which tempts to stop the process, while analysis is further needed,
- skills in group dynamics are required,
- the PRA may generate conflicts within the community, and certainly does generate expectations of change,
- it works better, where village institutions are functioning,
- it provides excess collection of information, and less time for processing,
- it is difficult for the researcher to document,
- the traditional career pattern is threatened,
- it is difficult to initiate in old organisations with established methodological patterns,

- less effective in heterogenous societies,
- extrapolation and blueprinting is difficult based upon PRA,
- and it is difficult to integrate with other conventional methods.

The perspective of the utilisation of PRA might be seen from India, where since 1990 information from 200 villages is being provided on a regular basis, i.e. quarterly meetings, and a village federation is taking shape. This federation is itself now employing 4 field-level workers to support the on-going information to be utilised by the villages themselves in their development efforts.

## 5. Overview of the Papers Presented

- 5.1 *"Choice of Technology in Relation with Societal and Cultural Conditions of Local Community"*,  
by Research Fellow, Ph.D.-candidate, Bashir Ahmad, Aalborg University.
- 5.2 *"Socio-Economic Study of the Fisherfolk Community of Bangladesh and India"*,  
by Research Fellow, Ph.D.-candidate, Khursid Alam, Aalborg University.
- 5.3 *"Cultural Aspects of Perception and Practises Concerning Fisheries Resources and Their Conservation Among Smallscale Fishermen in Bangladesh"*,  
by Ph.D.-candidate, Eva Skagerstam, Lunds University.
- 5.4. *"Evaluating Social Consequences of Social Changes in the Third World Countries"*,  
by Professor, Ph.D., Hans Gullestrup, Aalborg University.
- 5.5 *"Literacy and Literatures as Political Means Among the Santal of India"*,  
by Ph.D.-candidate, Peter B. Andersen, Copenhagen University.
- 5.6 *"Fishing in Karnataka and Forest Laws in India"*,  
by Research Fellow, Ph.D.-candidate, Stig Toft Madsen, Lunds University.
- 5.7 *"Introduction of Smallscale Windmills in Sundarbans of West Bengal"*,  
by Sociologist, Ph.D.-candidate, Frants Christensen.

## 6. Conclusion

The seminar has tried to utilise the concept of local community in a specific regional setting as a focal point in approaching different issues within a range of disciplines: anthropology, political science, economy, cultural studies, literature, humanities and natural sciences. Though the definitions on this concept have varied, the entry point of a local, specific area has been fruitful in understanding the problems and issues involved, even if the researchers have a very different professional background.

Further, the different disciplinary approaches have made a more comprehensive understanding, in a real sense, an interdisciplinary understanding of the many-sided aspects of rural life and community feasible.

It has not been possible to develop a common 'Bay of Bengal'-approach, even though the political institutional environment, as shown by the introduction by Neil Webster is very alike in the region, but the gathering of researchers, who have a common knowledge of the geographical area of the Bay of Bengal, and a joint interest in the rural people living in this area, has indeed been a very fruitful platform for the interdisciplinary discussions on a wide range of topics - a range, which just seen at a glance from the list of papers presented might have been found incomprehensible. Maybe also because of the intimate atmosphere, which developed among the participants, since the number was rather small, the experiences very widespread and for most researchers based upon years of living or work in the region, the general conclusion was one of reciprocal constructive criticism and support to the research projects on-going. It was an unanimous resolution, that seminars organised similarly in a confined, rural setting, with a limited number of researchers/Ph.D.-candidates having a common specific geographical regional knowledge should be offered more frequently. The Department of Development and Planning e.g., could initiate this.

Finally, it was found, that the Participatory Rural Appraisal as a research method in a developmental perspective was useful for most of the participants in their specific projects.

Aalborg University  
Department of Development and Planning

November, 11, 1992.

Researcher Training Seminar

**Local Community Development Around the Bay of Bengal:  
Context, Crises and Perspectives.**

**Final Programme**

Thursday, November, 12:

- |                |   |
|----------------|---|
| 09.00 - 10.00: | Introduction to the Theme of the Seminar, and Finalisation of Programme, by Henrik A. Nielsen, AUC.   |
| 10.00 - 12.00: | The Natural Environment of the Local Communities, by Martin Greeley, IDS.<br>(Coffee Break as convenient)   |
| 12.00 - 13.00: | Lunch.  |
| 13.00 - 15.00: | The Linkages between the Local Community and the Political Environment, by Neil Webster, CDR.   |
| 15.00 - 16.00: | Outdoor Break and Coffee.   |
| 16.00 - 17.00: | Choice of Technology in relation with Societal and Cultural Conditions of Local Community, by Bashir Ahmad, AUC.  |
| 17.00 - 18.00: | Socio-Economic Study of the Fisherfolk Community of Bangladesh and India, by Khursid Alam, AUC.   |
| 18.00 - 19.00: | Dinner.   |
| 19.00 - 20.00: | Cultural Aspects of Perceptions and Practises concerning Fisheries Resources and their Conservation Among Smallscale Fishermen in Bangladesh, by Eva Skagerstam, Lund's University. |
| 20.00 - 21.00: | Evaluating Social Consequences of Social Changes in the Third World Countries, by Hans Gullestrup, AUC.   |
| 21.00 - :      | Light Refreshment, Video on CODEC and Relaxation.   |

Friday, November, 13:

- |                |  |
|----------------|--|
| 08.00 -09.00:  | Breakfast.   |
| 09.00 - 12.00: | Research Methodologies for the Study of the Local Communities Around the Bay of Bengal, by Parmesh Shah, IDS. (Coffee Break as convenient) |
| 12.00 - 13.00: | Lunch.   |
| 13.00 - 14.00: | Literacy and Literatures as Political Means Among the Santal of India, by Peter Birkelund Andersen, Copenhagen University.                 |
| 14.00 - 15.00: | Fishing in Karnataka and Forest Laws in India, by Stig Toft Madsen, Lund's University.   |
|                | (Coffee Break as convenient)   |
| 15.00 - 16.00: | Introduction of Smallscale Windmills in Sundarbans of West Bengal, by Frants Christensen.  |
| 16.00 - 16.30: | Summing Up and Evaluation of the Seminar.  |



**Aalborg University**  
**Department of Development and Planning**

Researcher Training Seminar November, 12-13, 1992

**Local Community Development Around the Bay of Bengal:  
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**List of Participants**

Bashir Ahmad Research Fellow, Ph.D.-Candidate	Aalborg University Department of Development and Planning Fibigerstraede 2, DK 9220 Aalborg Tlph. + 45 98 15 85 22, ext. 2494
Khursid Alam Research Fellow, Ph.D.-Candidate	Aalborg University Department of Development and Planning Fibigerstraede 2, DK 9220 Aalborg Tlph. + 45 98 15 85 22, ext. 2498
Peter B. Andersen Ph.D.-Candidate	Copenhagen University Department for History of Religions St.Kannikestræde 11,1, DK 1469 Copenhagen Tlph. +45 33 14 74 66
Frants Christensen Sociologist, Ph.D.-Candidate	Sct.Jørgensvej 62 DK 5700 Svendborg Tlph. +45 62 21 79 79

Dr. Martin Greeley  
Research Fellow

Institute of Development Studies  
University of Sussex  
Brighton, BN1 9RE, UK  
Tlph. +44 273 60 62 61 ext. 4201

Hans Gullestrup  
Professor, Ph.D.

Aalborg University  
Department of Development and Planning  
Fibigerstraede 2, DK 9220 Aalborg  
Tlph. +45 98 15 85 22

Stig Toft Madsen  
Research Fellow,  
Ph.D.-Candidate

Lund's University  
Institute of Sociology of Law  
Bredgatan 4, S 222 21 Lund, Sweden  
Tlph. +46 46 108 811

Henrik A. Nielsen  
Senior Lecturer

Aalborg University  
Department of Development and Planning  
Fibigerstraede 2, DK 9220 Aalborg  
Tlph. +45 98 15 85 22, ext. 2424

Parmesh Shah  
Ph.D.-Candidate

Institute of Development Studies  
University of Sussex  
Brighton, BN1 9RE, UK  
Tlph. +44 272 60 62 61

Eva Skagerstam  
Ph.D.-Candidate

Lund's University  
Institute of Sociology  
Paradisgatan 5, S 221 00 Lund, Sweden  
Tlph. +46 46 104 051

Neil Webster  
Research Fellow, Ph.D.

Centre for Development Research  
Gl.Kongevej 5, DK 1610 Copenhagen  
Tlph. +45 33 25 12 00

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